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AFTERGLOW

AFTERGLOW

LATER POEMS

BY

JULIA C. R. DORR



NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1900
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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

THE DEVINNE PRESS

TO S. M. D.



If love could wing its flight
To yon far realm of light,
Fain would I bring to you,
O tender heart and true,
These spoils of later years,
Half sunshine and half tears!

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AFTERGLOW

LATER POEMS

INCONSISTENCY

I

WHEN dawns some day fairer than other days,
And all the mountain passes are aglow
With its supernal splendor, and the low,
Dim valleys sleeping in the woodland ways
Waken to glorious life at morn's first rays,—
When happy birds sing, and all winds that blow,
Laden with seeds of blessing come and go,
And earth no secret of her woe betrays,—
Then, O belovèd, when my heart is light
And all is well with me, and pain and care
Have vanished as a dream of last year's rose
Fades with the passing of a summer night,
My soul in ecstasy of love and prayer
Cries: "God, I thank thee that he knows, he
knows!"

II

But on some other day, when skies unroll
 Their storm-cloud banners only, and the beat
 Of the wild tempest is like hurrying feet
That stay not, halt not, till they reach the goal ;
When doubt and dread assail my fainting soul,
 And, when I fain God's mercy would entreat,
 Even the prayers my trembling lips repeat
Seem like the clamor of harsh bells that toll—
Then, thinking of thee in some far, dim realm,—
 Dim to our senses, glorious to thine,—
 Where never once a cruel wind doth blow,
Nor storm, nor stress, come near thee to o'erwhelm,
I lift mine eyes unto the hills divine,
 And cry: "Thank God, thank God, he does not
 know!"

WHOM THE GODS LOVE

I

“WHOM the Gods love die young”? Nay, rather say
With bated breath, “Whom the Gods love die
old!”

Shall the morn pale ere it hath coined its gold?
The sun go down while yet it is full day?

The statue sleep unmoulded in the clay?

The parchment crumble ere it is unrolled?

The story end with half the tale untold?

The song drop mute and breathless by the way?

Oh, weep for Adonais when he dies

With all youth's lofty promise unfulfilled,

Its splendor lost in sudden drear eclipse!

With love un-lived and dreams half dreamed he lies,

All the red wine from life's gold chalice spilled

Ere its bright brim hath touched his eager lips!

II

Whom the Gods love die old! O life, dear life,
Let the old sing thy praises, for they know
How year by year the summers come and go,
Each with its own abounding sweetness rife!
They know, though frosts be cruel as the knife,
Yet with each June the perfect rose shall blow,
And daisies blossom and the green grass grow,
Triumphant still, unvexed by storm or strife.
They know that night more splendid is than day;
That sunset skies flame in the gathering dark,
And the deep waters change to molten gold;
They know that Autumn richer is than May;
They hear the night-birds singing like the lark—
Ah, life, sweet life, whom the Gods love die old!

HUSH!

OH, hush thee, Earth! Fold thou thy weary palms!
The sunset glory fadeth in the west;
The purple splendor leaves the mountain's crest;
Gray twilight comes as one who beareth alms,
Darkness and silence and delicious calms.
Take thou the gift, O Earth! on Night's soft breast
Lay thy tired head and sink to dreamless rest,
Lulled by the music of her evening psalms.
Cool darkness, silence, and the holy stars,
Long shadows when the pale moon soars on
high,
One far, lone night-bird singing from the hill,
And utter rest from Day's discordant jars;
O soul of mine! when the long night draws
nigh
Will such deep peace thine inmost being fill?

THY SONGS AND MINE

SING thou my songs for me when I am dead!
Soul of my soul, some day thou wilt awake
To see the morning on the hilltops break,
And the far summits flame with rosy red—
But I shall wake not, though above my head
Armies should thunder; nor for Love's sweet sake,
Though he the tenderest pilgrimage should make
Where I am lying in my grassy bed.
I shall be silent, with my song half sung;
I shall be dumb, with half the story told;
I shall be mute, leaving the half unsaid.
Take thou the harp ere yet it be unstrung—
Wake thou the lyre ere yet its chords be cold—
Sing thou my songs, and thine, when I am dead!

A POET'S WIFE

TO L. A.

WHEN first I saw thy face, I found thee fair,
Dainty and fragrant as a perfect rose
That in some sweet, secluded garden grows.
Thou didst remind me of a jewel rare
Most fitly set; a pearl a king might wear
When, in high banquet-halls at daylight's close,
On blazoned walls a softened splendor glows,
And pulsing music thrills the enchanted air.
Again we met, one sullen wintry day;
We talked of life and love, of sorrow's night,
Of death's dark why and wherefore, till thine eyes
Grew deep with thought and prayer. Then said I,
"Nay!
Why should thy rare bard mourn the Goddess'
flight?
This muse shall lure him to song's upper skies!"

“DO THEY MEASURE TIME WHERE
THOU ART?”

Do they measure time where thou art? Dost thou
know
How the immutable, relentless years,
Delaying not for human hopes or fears,
In long processions still come and go?
When, as of old, thy summer roses blow,
Art thou aware, thou who art done with tears?
O blessed habitant of other spheres,
Takest thou heed of Earth's hoar-frost and snow?
We count the years, and tell them, one by one,
Since thy feet trod the path where silence is;
How oft the harvest moon has waned! we say.
Dost thou remember when thy rest was won?
Or art thou like to the high Gods in this,
That unto thee a year is but a day?

THE WISE MEN

YE happy stars, that o'er the desert wold
Saw Jasper, Melchior, and Balthazar
 Bearing rich gifts and offerings from afar
(Sweet Orient spices, gems, and burning gold)
To Bethlehem's manger, where the Child foretold
 By seer and prophet slept beneath his star,—
 Fill with glad song the blue depths where ye are,
Singing as sang the morning stars of old!
Lo! once again the wise men from the East,
 Crossing the desert and the rolling main
 And the high mountains, bid their eyes behold
The glory of the Lord! To his great feast
 Thronging they press, the eager, mystic train,
 Giving and taking wine and oil untold!

A KNIGHT-ERRANT

LET me not weep! Thou wert as true' a knight
As ever yet laid his proud lance in rest
For tilt or tournament, or wore his crest
Of blazoned splendor in the thickest fight!
When trumpets blared, in all thine armor dight,
Forth didst thou fare to do thy lord's behest,
Nor shrank from fiercest field, nor hardest quest,
Keeping his banner ever in thy sight.
If now thy liege hath further need of thee
In the high courts of some wide realm afar,
Where in fair state his best and noblest are,
Shall I bewail thee with my woman's tears?
Nay! Go thou on at his most wise decree,
And dwell triumphant in those higher spheres!

THE COUNTERSIGN

How shall I know thee when we two shall meet
In the vast spaces where the dead abide?
Never on earth shall we stand side by side.
I have not heard thy voice, nor the quick beat
Of thy glad footsteps in the hurrying street ;
Nor have I seen thy face ; nor, in the wide,
Deep silences where prayer is justified,
Have we two knelt God's dear love to entreat.
Then by what strange, mysterious countersign,
What mystic shibboleth, will thy strong soul
Recognize mine in that transcendent hour
When, face to face on some fair mount divine,
We see far off the mighty planets roll,
Love and immortal life our deathless dower?

THE DOWER

THE whole wide earth, O poet, is thy dower:
 Claim thou its affluence as by right divine.
 For thee suns rise and set, and clear stars shine,
Old ocean rolls, and far heights heavenward tower.
The thrush and nightingale, and every flower
 Of every clime and every age, are thine;
 All Gods shall fill thy golden cup with wine,
All prophets pledge thee in the uplifted hour!
Thine are the mysteries of life and death:
 All loves, all joys, all passion, and all pain,
 Temptations shared not, sins thou hast not
 known,
False hopes, frail raptures trembling at a breath,
 The hero's ecstasy, the martyr's gain,
 The high prayer soaring to the Great White
 Throne!

SUPPLICATION

FORSAKE me not, O Light of many days!
 Low sinks the westering sun ;
 An amethystine haze
Flushes with purple all the upland ways ;
The shadows lengthen in the twilight glow,
 And well I know
 That day is almost done!

Thou whom I worshipped when my life was new,
 Say not that we must part !
 I have been leal and true,
Loving thee better as the swift years flew,
With such pure homage that nor time nor change
 Could e'er estrange
 From thee my constant heart.

When I was but a child I heard thy voice,
And followed thee afar
In humble, happy choice,
Content in this far following to rejoice;
Didst thou but whisper, heaven and earth grew bright
With holy light,
Clearer than sun or star.

I dared not kiss thy garment's hem, nor lay
One pale flower at thy feet:
It was enough to stray
In a child's dream of thee by night, by day,
In tremulous ecstasy to feel thee near,
And half in fear,
Half joy, thy coming greet.

For thou wert one with nature. All things fair
Spoke to my soul of thee:
The azure depths of air,
Sunrise, and starbeam, and the moonlight rare,
Splendor of summer, winter's frost and snow,
Autumn's rich glow,
Bird, river, flower, and tree.

Thou wert in love's first whisper, and the slow
 Thrill of its dying kiss;
 In the strong ebb and flow
Of the resistless tides of joy and woe;
In life's supremest hour thou hadst a share,
 Its stress of prayer,
 Its rapturous trance of bliss!

Leave me not now when the long shadows fall
 Athwart the sunset bars;
 Hold thou my soul in thrall
Till it shall answer to a mightier call;
Remain thou with me till the holy night
 Puts out the light—
 And kindles all the stars!

THE COMRADES

THE SOUL TO THE BODY

COMRADE, art thou weary?
Hath the way been long?
Dost thou faint and falter—
Thou, who wert so strong?

Ah, I well remember
How, when life was young,
Forth we fared together,
Glad of heart and tongue.

Then no height appalled thee;
Thou didst mount and sing
With the joyous ardor
Of a bird on wing!

Once thou wert the stronger—
 Led me by thy will;
I obeyed thy mandates,
 Gloried in thy skill;

Owed thee much, and loved thee,
 Half the joy of living
(Comrade, dost thou hear me?)
 Hath been of thy giving.

Think what thou has brought me!
 All that eye hath seen—
Glow of dawn and sunset;
 Starlight's silver sheen;

All the pomp and splendor
 Of the summer day;
Gleam of sparkling waters
 Leaping in their play;

Night and storm and darkness;
 Mountains high and hoar;
Ocean billows sweeping
 On from shore to shore!

Think of what I owe thee!
Fragrance of the rose,
Breath of odorous lily
And each flower that blows;

Song of thrush and veery
Deep in woodland bowers;
Chime of sweet bells pealing
From cathedral towers;

Love's most dear caresses,
Touch of lip and cheek,
Throb of heart revealing
What no tongue can speak!

Lifelong friend and comrade,
Twin-born brother, thou,
Think how thou hast served me—
Let me serve thee now!

Let my strength uphold thee
As thine own strength fails,
As the way grows steeper
And the night prevails.

Cheer thee, cheer thee, comrade!

Drink thou of my wine ;

Lo! the cup I bring thee

Holds a draught divine!

AN AFTERTHOUGHT

THE BODY TO THE SOUL

TOGETHER still, old comrade—thou and I!
From out the dark, drear places,
The awful, rayless spaces,
Where only storms and dreadful shapes swept by,
We have come forth again
Into the world of men,
Have seen the darkness vanish, and the day
Drive night away!

Art thou not glad? Is it not good to be
Alive on this green earth,
This realm of home and hearth?
Is it not good for thee as well as me?
Oh, earth is warm and dear;
Its touch is close and near;
And the unknown is cold and dim, and far
As any star!

Speak thou, O soul! Art thou not glad to-day
That we are still together
In the clear summer weather?
Can see the shadows on the mountains play,
The glory of the trees,
The splendor of the seas,
The pomp of dawn and sunset, and the fair
Blue fields of air?

Hark, how the birds are singing! and I hear
From shrub and flower and tree
The humming of the bee,
Nature's melodious chanting soft and clear,
The breath of winds that pass
Over the bending grass,
Childhood's blithe laughter, and the sweet
Fall of its feet!

Thank God! thank God! Comrade, rejoice with me
In that I still am here
Where life and love are dear,
And as of old clasp loyal hands with thee!

And yet—and yet—
I cannot quite forget
That thou didst fail me in mine hour of need,
Nor gave me heed!

Ah, whither didst thou flee what time I lay
In the unfathomed dark?
Soul, didst thou find an ark
Secure and safe until the dawn of day,
Forgetting thou hadst sworn
An oath not yet outworn,
To stay me with thy strength, to bring me wine
From hills divine?

But—I forgive thee! It may be that thou,
Even as I, wert bound
Beyond all ken, or sound,
Or faintest memory of earthly vow.
So, hand in hand, old friend,
Until the path shall end,
We will fare on together, thou and I,
Counting the stars on high!

THE SANCTUARY LAMP

THUS spake the lady abbess, as the nuns
Passed, two by two, through the wide cloister gate
Whereon were carven figures of dead saints
And kneeling women bearing in their hands
Ascension lilies: "Go ye one and all
To the confessional, and shrive yourselves;
Then kneel at the high altar, and pray ye
For one who lieth very near to death."
Then the pale nuns, with sudden, swift accord,
Made each the mystic token of the cross,
And passed on silently, save one—the last,
Who walked alone, the eldest of the house.
"Is it the novice?" said she, speaking low.
"Let others pray! I will keep watch with thee."

“Nay, it is not the novice. She does well,”
The abbess made hushed answer; “come with me.”
Down the long corridor she swept in haste,
Her robe a trailing shadow, her dark veil
Floating behind her, and her snowy band
A white flame on her forehead, till she paused
At a low door set in the eastern wall;
Then turned and whispered: “She hath come at last,
Our great Queen Berengaria, to die
In the fair abbey she hath builded well.
Enter, but speak not, for mayhap she sleeps.”

The white, hushed room was like a temple dim
With floating incense; for the lamp burnt low,
And through the latticed casement softly stole
The night wind heavy with the fragrant breath
Of rose and violet. On a low couch
Lay the fair woman Cœur de Lion loved,
And all the golden splendor of her hair,
Unbound, unbraided, rippled to the floor
Like waves of sunshine in a shady glen;
And all her eyes' blue splendor lit the place,

Mocking the flame that burnt upon her cheek.
"Ah! never death wore such fair guise before,
If this be death," Assunta said, and wept ;
Yet in her heart believed not it was death,
So like it seemed to flush of youth and health.
But the wise abbess knew, for she had gone
With many a one to the extremest verge
Of the dark vale where soul and body part.
Swiftly she crossed the chamber, and knelt down
To touch the hot lips of the queen with wine ;
Then drew Assunta nearer, whispering : " Look !
Her poor wits wander ! She would braid her hair
As for a festival." For in and out
Through the long, golden meshes of her hair
Her trembling fingers strayed continuously,
Weaving the shining strands.

" Nay, my sweet Queen,"

The abbess said, stilling the restless hands,
" I am your tire-woman ! Be it mine
To bind these heavy tresses. Rest, dear heart."
But Berengaria smiled. " My wits stray not,
Dear Mother Abbess. Gather you my hair

In one thick coil—thus—and lay the rope
Here in my hand. Now from my casket there
Reach me the jewelled blade King Richard wore
What time he fought with Saladin and drove
Him out from Ascalon. He gave it me,
With jest and laughter, one short hour before
Proud Fanuelle fell—slain by the Saracens.”
Then, lifting her right arm, with one swift stroke
She severed the bright tresses, and fell back
Unnerved, and pallid as a wan, white ghost
That walks at midnight.

When her heart once more
Sent the red current tingling through her veins,
Again she spake: “Dear Abbess, give me leave
For this one night to rule thy flock and thee!
Go thou, Assunta, and with no delay
Bring thou twelve sisters hither—they who are
Of all your house most light and deft of touch,
Swiftest to learn and do.”

And soon the nuns
Entered the chamber as it were a shrine,

Crossing themselves and kneeling, one by one.
"Do me this grace, my sisters," said the queen.
"For this one night your wonted rest forego,
And do my bidding. Take this coil of hair—
O golden waves Richard so oft hath kissed! —
And braid twelve slender chains as soft as silk;
Then braid the twelve together."

All night long

The pale nuns bent them to their lovely task,
Nor spake one to another. Silently
The gold chains lengthened, while the lamps burnt
clear,
Making still radiance in the quiet room;
And Berengaria lay with folded palms,
Patiently waiting. Once a night-bird sang
Outside the casement, and she, hearkening, smiled.
Just as the dawn was breaking, in her hands
They laid a shining rope as soft as silk,
But strong as hempen cable.

"List ye all,"

Then said the queen, as round her slender wrist
She wound its golden length caressingly,

Laid it against her cheek, and to her breast
Pressed it with two white hands and held it close.
“ My liege lord sleeps in Fontevraud, and there
Above his tomb hang ye a jewelled lamp
Swinging from this fair chain—sole part of me
That age can wither not, nor time deface!
Let the lamp burn with ever-during flame.
But lay my body in the abbey here ;
It shall not lie where he who loved it so—”

She ceased, and reverently the kneeling nuns
Waited the moment she should further speak ;
And as they listened, lo! the nightingale
Wailed faintly in the distance, and a lark
Filled the new day with ecstasy of song.

AFTER THE MAGNIFICAT

I, MARY, unto whom the angel bore,
 That wondrous, moonlit night,
 On wings of light,
Message no mortal ever heard before,
 Waking me from the sleep
 Of maiden dreams, to weep
And smile in startled wonder—could I know
 It meant such woe?

“Blessèd” the angel called me. I *am* blest!
 Let no man dare to say
 I am not, who can lay
My Holy Child’s fair head upon my breast.
 He is mine own, mine own!
 Let my lips make no moan
While it is theirs his brow, his lips, to kiss,
 Like this—like this!

And yet—and yet—at first I did not know!
I was as others are—
A child with life afar,
A maiden dreaming in the dawn's young glow;
And when the angel came,
Calling me by my name,
And told me what should be, I lifted up
My hands and took the cup!

Then came the slow, strange hours when in me grew
Sense of diviner things.
My soul found wings,
And from its nest on mighty pinions flew;
Sang the exulting song
That ages shall prolong—
Sang the Magnificat, and did not shrink
From the flood's brink!

But now, O mothers, I have grown too wise!
What say the prophets old
In scriptures manifold?
A dove that hath no nest beneath the skies;

A lamb to slaughter led ;
A king with uncrowned head ;
A man acquaint with grief—who knows
All human woes!

Despised—rejected—and that sharper word,
Forsaken! Let me be,
Ye who would comfort me!
That word strikes deeper than a two-edged sword.
My little one, my child,
Forgive me that I smiled
When the proud Magi brought their gifts to thee
On bended knee!

Dost thou know what is coming? In thine eyes,
That seem to look afar,
Where God's own secrets are,
There grows a kindling wonder and surprise.
Thou art mine Holy One,
Yet, though high heaven be won,
I am thy mother! Smile upon me, sweet,
Here at thy feet!

THREE CROSSES

THERE were three crosses on the hill,
Three shadows downward thrown ;
O Mary Mother, heard you not
The other mothers' moan ?

Your Son—he was the Holy One
Whom angels comforted ;
They touched his lips with heavenly wine
In those dark hours of dread !

For him all nature mourned ; the sun
Veiled its resplendent face ;
Darkness and tumult for his sake
Filled all the awful space.

And you—the sword that pierced your heart
 Grave prophets had foretold ;
You saw the crown above the cross,
 Clear shining as of old!

O Mary Mother, sitting now
 Enthroned beside your Son,
You knew even then the glorious end
 For which the deed was done!

You saw the ages bending low
 In homage at his feet ;
You heard the songs of triumph,
 And the music piercing sweet.

Three crosses on dark Calvary's hill,
 Three awful shadows thrown ;
Three mothers, faint with anguish sore,
 Making to God their moan.

But they, those other mothers, who
 Bent down to comfort them?
They cowered afar ; they had not dared
 To touch your garment's hem.

Even if in mockery, your Son
Was crowned and hailed as king ;
While theirs—disgraced, dishonored they,
Past all imagining!

They loved like you ; their sons had lain
Like yours in sinless rest,
Cradled to slumber, soft and deep,
On each fond, faithful breast.

Yet now the terror and the shame,
The agony untold,
The deathless mother-love, unquenched
By horrors manifold!

Three crosses on the dreadful hill,
Three shadows downward thrown ;
Mother of Sorrows, thou hast borne
Not one sharp pang alone!

ON THE HEIGHT

LIKE some great Merlin of an elder day,
In robes of glistening samite clasped with pearl,
White-haired, white-bearded, self-contained, and lone,
Thy radiant forehead lifted to the skies,
Majestic in pure splendor, thou dost sit,
Monarch of mountains, while the lesser kings,—
Only less kingly than thyself,—as if
In some high presence-chamber, proudly wait,
On either hand, the setting of the sun.
Far in the kindling west the globe of fire
Sinks slowly out of sight. The rich clouds fade;
The glory dies; earth shivers and is still.
Behold! thou too art growing gray with eld
When the swift afterglow, like living flame,
Crowns thee with rubies, wraps thee in soft robes
Pink-white and tender as blush rosès are,
And thou art beautiful as love's young dream!

What though the fair dream vanish as it came?
Lo! as I gaze with half-suspended breath,
The heavens open, and above thy brow
Jupiter blazes in the darkening skies,
Brightest of all thy diadem of stars.

Winter and silence and fast-gathering night!
Dost thou remember—thou who now no more
Answerest by word or token to my cry—
Dost thou remember one fair summer eve,
Long, long ago, ere winter nights came down,
When thou and I scaled yon far mountain height,
And climbed its highest peak, and stood alone,
Hand clasped in hand, heart beating close to heart,
Poised between earth and sky? Beneath us rolled,
Like ocean waves when all the winds are still,
Billows of verdure to the horizon's verge;
Green, dimpled valleys, interlaced with streams;
Fair silver lakes, all tremulous with stars;
And multitudinous mountains, far and near,
Encompassing the whole. All this we saw,
Then turned and saw each other—which was more!

WHEN SPENSER DIED

THUS spake my Lord of Essex on the day
When, after woful stress, rare Spenser died :
“ Now give ye heed, my lieges! Ye shall lay
My Spenser forth in splendor and in pride,
With rich array of banners floating wide,
And pomp of sable plumes, and scutcheons fair.
Let kind Death yield him what stern Life denied!
Then bear him to the abbey's holy air,
That he the sepulchre of buried kings may share!”

They laid him forth. Then up the mighty nave,
Hung with rich tapestries that to and fro
Waved softly in the scented air, all brave
With dim, historic splendors, to the flow

Of rolling music, tremulous and slow,
With solemn liturgies and chantings clear,
Through the vast arches echoing soft and low,
They bore him onward to the silence drear,
While kings and priests of song walked by his stately
bier.

With tender hands the velvet pall they bore,
Wrought with rich arabesques of silver sheen,
Its silver fringes sweeping the dark floor
Of the gray, pillared aisles they moved between ;
Nor paused until, with proud yet reverent mien,
Where Chaucer slept they lowered him to his rest ;
Then gently dropped into the void unseen
Odes, for spring flowers, to die upon his breast
In fragrant, voiceless speech, that still their love
confessed.

And, ere they left him to his long repose,
Into the brooding dark each poet cast
The pen his verse was writ with. Ah! who knows?
The years are silent, and the hoary past ;

And Fame's far trump hath no resounding blast
Heralding name or state. Yet make ye room,
O mighty shades, for one, the first and last
And mightiest of ye all! In Spenser's tomb
Mayhap our Shakespeare's pen yet lights the murky
gloom!

LOOKING TOWARD SPAIN

I STAND on a rocky headland
Far out in the deep blue main,
And only its tremulous splendor
Lies between me and Spain.

Behind me the pine-tree forest,
Singing the old refrain ;
Before, the exulting billows
And the far dreamland of Spain.

On the red rocks dash the breakers ;
Their spray is a blinding rain ;
My hair is wet with the sea-foam,
But the wind blows straight from Spain.

Hark to the roar and the tumult
And the cries like a soul in pain!
But beyond is the calm and the silence,
And the beautiful land of Spain.

Afar, on the dim horizon,
I watch with a yearning vain
Yon fair ship gallantly sailing
Straight on to the ports of Spain.

And it's oh, for the splendid castles,
And the light on tower and fane,
And the mystical, magical glory
Of the marvellous realm of Spain!

Night falls on the rocky headland
As day and its splendors wane,
While o'er the dark waters the moonlight
Is building a bridge to Spain.

But I think with an infinite longing
Of the hopes that no longer reign,
Of the dreams that are past fulfilment,
Unless on thy shores, O Spain!

INSTALLATION HYMN

SING aloud, O happy voices!

Fill the air with joyful praise,
While each grateful heart rejoices
In the gift that crowns our days.

Sing for joy, but let your singing
To the heights of prayer upreach;
To thy throne, O God, are winging
Thoughts too vast for human speech.

Yet for him whom thou hast sent us
Now with yearning hearts we pray;
Keep thou him whom thou hast lent us,
Father, near to thee always.

When his heart grows faint and weary,
Strengthen him with heavenly wine;
If his path grows dark or dreary,
Lighten it with light divine.

When the spirit, Lord, is willing,
Though the shrinking heart is weak,
Let thy voice, all tempests stilling,
Blessèd words of comfort speak.

When he kneels beside our dying,
When he lays our dead away,
In our anguish and our crying,
Teach thou him what words to say.

When before thy holy altar
He shall pour the sacred wine,
Let his strong hand never falter,
Holding fast to hand of thine.

Now on pastor and on people,
Lord, thy fullest blessing pour,
While the bell from out the steeple
Rings in peace forevermore.

THE SACRAMENTAL HYMN

“And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives.”

OH, to have heard that hymn
Float through the chamber dim,
Float through that “upper room,”
Hushed in the twilight gloom!
Up the dark, starry skies
Rolled the deep harmonies;—
Angels who heard the strain,
How ran the high refrain?

How rose the holy song?
Triumphant, clear, and strong,
As a glad bird uplift
Over the wild sea-drift?

Or was its liquid flow
Tremulous, sad, and slow—
Presage and prophecy
Of lone Gethsemane?

Was it a lofty psalm,
Foretelling crown and palm?
Soared it to heights of prayer
On the still, vibrant air?
When the last feast was spread,
And the last words were said,
Sang the Lord Christ the hymn
In the old chamber dim?

LESSONS TWAIN

JUST two things you knew,
Little one who flew
Like a dove to heaven
One fair summer even :
Love and pain. These two
Held Life's lore for you!

Child, do we know more?
Earth for you is o'er ;
All that it hath brought you,
All that it hath taught you ;
Lessons twain for thee—
How much more know we?

OUTLIVED

NOT alone the trembling stars
Glimmering through their cloudy bars ;
Not alone yon mountain height
Firm in adamantine might ;
Not alone the rolling seas
Dread with awful mysteries ;
Nor the green earth, lying fair
Under smiling depths of air ;
Nor the lofty towers that man,
Strong to do and wise to plan,
Hath reared proudly, stone by stone,
To the heavens—not these alone
Have outlived thee, thou whose dust
Earth hath held in sacred trust,
While a century hath shed
Countless blooms above thy head.

Thou art dust, but toys remain
Fragile as a daisy-chain ;
Trifles light as thistle-down
Or the dandelion's crown !
Here's the cup that held your wine,
Frail and flower-like, thin and fine ;
Here's the beaker whose slight rim
Reddened when you kissed the brim ;
Here's the glass that held your face
Mirrored in its curving grace ;
Linen wrought with dainty care ;
Laces delicate as air ;
Letters where your name is set,
Holding subtle fragrance yet ;—
Thou art dust, while toys remain
Fragile as a daisy-chain !

JACQUES AND SUZETTE

THERE you sit in a niche together,
Out of the reach of wind and weather,
Looking down on a fierce bronze dragon,
A cloisonné vase, and a gilded flagon,
The opal gleam of a Venice glass,
A chamois climbing an Alpine pass,
An ivory boat from far Japan,
An odorous flask from Ispahan,
 And a host of things—
Trifles that last while Life takes wings!

O chère Suzette, what years have flown
Since you and Jacques were together thrown,
And loved and quarrelled, and loved again—
The old, old fate of dames and men!

But there you sit in your carven shrine,
With never a thought of me or mine,
 Even though beset
By your great-great-grandchildren, belle Suzette!

Puffed and powdered your golden hair
Gleaming under the rose you wear,
One long, loose curl drooping low
Over your bosom's tender snow ;
Arching eyebrows, and smiling lips
Red as the rose the wild bee sips—

 Thus, even yet,
I see and I know you, chère Suzette!

White puffed sleeves and a fall of lace,
Lending your figure girlish grace ;
Purple bodice that gems bedeck ;
A string of amethysts round your neck ;
Plenty of furbelows to show
How you plumed your gay wings long ago,
 Lady Suzette,
In the days when youth and pleasure met.

But, Grand-père Jacques, with your curled brown
wig,

And your broad white kerchief, trim and trig,
Out of which rises your shaven chin,
With your delicate lips and your nostrils thin,
And a certain self-confident, high-bred air,
Smiling and gallant and debonair—

I wonder yet
If she made your heart ache, this Suzette?

Or perhaps, monsieur, 'twas the other way;
For she was jealous and you were gay,
And under that frill of falling snow
A passionate heart beat warm, I know.
Dear Grand-père Jacques, I doubt if you
Were undeniably good and true;

Did you make her fret,
Though you called her gently, "Ma chère
Suzette"?

Ye do not answer, O smiling lips!
From the silent past no answer slips.

Quaint letters more than a century old
Hint at romances that might be told ;
But dust and ashes are all who knew
How life fared on between you two,
 Jacques and Suzette,
Or how its warp and its woof were set.

Nay, nay, dear hearts, I will vex you not ;
Be your loves, or glad or sad, forgot !
Keep ye your secrets as you will,
Sitting up yonder calm and still,
Side by side in a niche together,
Out of the reach of stormy weather,
 And whispering yet,
“ Mon ami Jacques ! ” “ Ma chère Suzette ! ”

AT BAR HARBOR

“PEACE be within thy walls!” the prophet cried
In far Jerusalem when time was young ;
O steadfast tower the changeful sea beside,
What sweeter words were ever said or sung!

Peace to thy walls! I cry with him of old ;
Peace that no storm disturbs, no tempest mars ;
May each glad morning bring to thee its gold,
Each tranquil night its benison of stars!

And peace to her, of this fair realm the queen,
Who bade thee rise where rolls the blue salt sea ;
Give her thy strength, ye spires of living green,
Thy deathless joy, O Ocean, wild and free!

HUBERT DE BURGH

“MAKE ready my war-ships,” cried Blanche of Castile ;
“ Make them stanch and well ordered from topmast
to keel ;

Then over the Channel in haste bid them dance,
Bearing aid to my Louis, fair Louis of France !”

There were eighty good ships, but with forty or less
Brave Hubert de Burgh dared the storm and the
stress ;

At the mouth of the Thames he encountered them all,
Overcame the proud Frenchmen and held them in
thrall.

He sent Louis home with his lilies all torn,
His banners all drooping, his glory all shorn ;
And the bold English barons made haste to declare
That Hubert de Burgh royal honors should share.

But alack and alas! for one dark day there rose
A clashing, a clamor, a tumult of foes,
Crying, "Death to Earl Hubert! With magical art
And unholy spells he hath won the king's heart!"

Straightway to the altar then fled he, and laid
His hand on the cross, as of old on his blade;
But fast his foes followed, like wolves on the track,
When the aisles of the forest with shadows are black!

They stayed not for candle, for book, nor for bell,
For the holy rood's chrism, the crosier's high spell;
From the chancel they dragged him forth into the
night,

While the stars veiled their faces and fled from the sight.

With clashing of broadswords above his bare head,
They haled and they harried him, sorely bestead,
Till they reached a brown smithy afar on the green,
Two pendulous, wide-spreading lindens between.

Then they cried to the blacksmith, with jeer and with
shout:

"Ho, varlet! from this your grim fortress come out,"

And forge us some fetters both heavy and strong,—
Chain-armor for one who shall wear it full long!”

Forth came the swart yeoman, and bent a low knee,
But not to that wild crew obeisance made he!
He knelt to Earl Hubert and kissed his cold hand,
Then rose and confronted the murderous band.

“ If I forge ye one bolt for Earl Hubert, who drave
The French from our land and their ships from the
 wave,
May my strong arm be palsied, my hand lose its skill.
I have but one life; take it now an ye will!”

They thundered and cursed, but unflinching he stood,
As with courage undaunted he faced the mad brood;
And to every fierce menace one answer he gave:
“ I forge ye no fetters for Hubert the brave!”

No chains for brave Hubert! The night wore away.
Birds twittered, mists lifted, the morning grew gray,
Ere, sullenly leaving the smithy's low door,
To the Tower, but unfettered, Earl Hubert they bore.

CHRISTIANA

SHE is wayworn, she is weary ;
She hath journeyed long and far,
In the dawning, and at noonday,
And beneath the evening star.

She hath carried heavy burdens ;
She hath borne another's load ;
She hath shared her herbs and lentils
With those fainting on the road.

Take her scrip and loose her sandals ;
Bring cool water for her feet ;
Lave her tired limbs, and fold them
In fair linen, fresh and sweet.

Part the soft hair on her forehead ;
 Lightly touch the drifted snow,
That was like the golden sunshine
 In rare summers long ago.

Whisper softly, for she sleepeth!
 Lay her pale hands on her breast.
Do not wake her! Lift her gently,
 Lest you break this perfect rest.

Bear her to the upper chamber ;
 Let the sound of weeping cease ;
For it looketh toward the sunrise,
 And the chamber's name is — *Peace*.

THE CHAMBER

Room where I so oft have slept,
Room where I so oft have wept,
Room wherein my dead have lain,
Wrapped away from care and pain,
When my earthly day is done,
Burdens dropped and rest begun,
Life and thought and being fled—
Who will love thee in my stead?

Who will make thee fair and sweet,
Bid the sun thy casements greet,
Open all thy windows fair
To the incense-laden air?
From the garden bring the rose,
And at daylight's dreamy close

See the moon's pale splendor fall
On the chamber's inmost wall?

I would charm thee, if I could,
Unto all that's bright and good,
For her sake who after me
Sometime shall find rest in thee.
I would weave a spell so rare—
Half a rhyme and half a prayer—
That nor grief nor pain nor sin
Through thy doors should enter in!

If she dreameth maiden dreams,
Be they calm as sunlit streams;
If in some far, golden year
A young mother shall lie here
With a fair child on her breast,
Cradled into softest rest,
Lo! I charge thee, for my sake,
Holy care of her to take!

If some woman, half dismayed,
Here shall see her beauty fade,

See a shadow slowly pass
O'er her image in the glass,
Comfort her, I pray thee! Spread
Wings of peace above her head;
Bid thine angels guard to keep
Over her, the while I sleep!

“IN MANUS TUAS, DOMINE!”

THE glow has faded from the west,
The splendor from the mountain's crest ;
Stern Day's relentless task is done,
And Nature rests at set of sun.
But ere she shuts her weary eyes,
Soothed as by airs of Paradise,
She softly prays on bended knee,

“ In manus tuas, Domine! ”

O silent hours, how dear ye are!
There is no light of moon or star ;
The twilight shadows slowly creep
From rock to rock, from steep to steep ;
The trees stand breathless on the hill,
The restless winds are hushed and still ;
Only one prayer from land and sea :

“ In manus tuas, Domine! ”

And, O my soul, be sure when night
In God's good time puts out the light,
And draws the curtains soft and dim
Round weary head and heart and limb,
You will be glad! But ere you go
To sleep that no rude dreams shall know,
Be this prayer said for you and me :

“*In manus tuas, Domine!*”

THE CITY CALLED CHU

THERE's a brave little captain goes sailing
Day by day o'er an 'ocean blue.
"Whither bound?" I demand, and he answers:
"I sail for the city called Chu!"

'Tis a wonderful ship that he sails in,
And 'tis manned by a wonderful crew,
But all tides that flow bear it onward
To the ports of the city called Chu.

It hath masts mortal hand never fashioned;
It hath sails earthly winds never blew;
And its keel and its rudder know only
The way to the city called Chu.

Oh, tell me, my brave little captain,
So ready to dare and to do,
What you find when you reach the fair city—
The marvellous city called Chu?

Hath it temples and turrets and towers
That soar to its skies of pure blue?
Hath it far-leaping splendor of fountains—
This beautiful city called Chu?

Hath it mystical, magical rivers?
Hath it roses that bloom the year through?
Hath it glamour of moonlight and starlight,
The love-haunted city called Chu?

Are its clear, silver bells ever chiming?
Hath it voices that call but to you?
Is there magic of music and laughter
In the halls of the city called Chu?

Sail on, oh, sail on, little captain,
So ready to dare and to do.
What is there this side of high heaven
So fair as your city called Chu?

THE DEATH-SONG OF THE HEMLOCK

YE say I am old—I am old ; and ye threaten to hew
me down,

Lest the roof of your puny dwelling should be crushed
by my heavy crown ;

Ye measure my spreading branches, ye mock me with
idle fears! —

Ye pygmies that creep at my foot-stool, what know ye
of age, or years?

I reckon ye all as shadows! Ye are but as clouds
that pass

Over the face of the mountains and over the meadow-
grass ;

Your generations are phantoms ; like wraiths they come
and go,

Leaving no trace behind them in the paths they used
to know!

But I! — For six hundred rolling years I have stood
like a watch-tower, I!

I have counted the slow procession of centuries cir-
cling by!

I have looked at the sun unblenching; I have num-
bered the midnight stars;

Nor quailed when the fiery serpent leaped from its
cloudy bars!

Or ever ye were a nation, or your commonwealth was
born,

I stood on this breezy hilltop, fronting the hills of
morn,

In the strength of my prime uplifting my head above
meaner things,

Till only the strong winds reached it, or the wild birds'
sweeping wings!

It was mine to know when the white man ventured
the unknown seas,

And silence fled before him, and the forest mysteries;

I saw his towers and steeples that pierced the unfathomed sky,
And his domes that darkened the heavens—but above them all soared I!

He builded his towns and cities, and his mansions fine and fair,
And slowly his fertile meadows grew wide in the tranquil air;
He stretched his iron pathways from the mountains to the sea—
But little cared I for his handiwork! 'Twas the one great God made me!

The Earth and the Sun and the mighty Winds, and the great God over all,
These bade me stand like a sentinel on the hilltop grand and tall.
Know ye that a hundred years ago men called me old and worn?
Yet here I tower above their graves, and laugh them all to scorn!

For what are threescore years and ten, ye creatures of
a day?

Ye are to me like the flying motes that in the sunshine
play!

Shall I tremble because ye threaten and whisper that
I am old?

I will die of my own free, lordly will, ere the year has
shed its gold!

But till then, as I stood or ever the land of your love
was born,

I will stand erect on my hilltop, fronting the hills of
morn,

In the pride of mine age uplifting my head above
meaner things,

Till only the strong winds reach it, or the wild birds'
sweeping wings!

FOR A CHRISTENING

BLOW softly, winds of the South!

Skies of the South, bend low!

Sparkle, ye radiant waters,

In the sunset's tender glow!

Keep watch and ward, O palm-trees!

Oaks, spread your branches wide!

O sentinel pine-trees, let your strength

Like the strength of the hills abide!

Disks of the Cherokee roses,

Gleam from your emerald bars!

O jasmines, swing your censers

In the light of your golden stars!

Fill the air, ye joyous wild birds,
With a glad, sweet roundelay,
For a little child is given
To the Lord Christ to-day!

Ah, what shall I bring to thee,
Child, who shall bear my name
When I shall lie unheeding
Or love or praise or blame ;

Who shall speak when I am silent ;
Who, when I lie deaf, shall hear
This dear earth's song of triumph,
And its hymns of lofty cheer ;

Who shall see my roses bloom,
And my snow-white lilies gleam,
In the sunlight and the starlight,
When I sleep without a dream?

Nay, little child, forgive me,
Nor think the strain too sad ;

One life must follow another,
But earth shall still be glad!

Evening must follow morning;
But the morn shall still be gay
With splendor of rose and purple,
And the pomp of glorious day!

And had I the mystic token,
I would weave a spell so rare,
It should be like a holy talisman,
Strong with the strength of prayer,

To charm thee from every sorrow,
To keep thee from every ill,
And with costliest wine of blessing
Thy waiting cup to fill!

THE DREAM-BEARER

(Suggested by Ross Turner's water-color, "The Golden Galleon.")

FROM what far wonderland of dreams,
What island of remotest seas,
O Golden Galleon, sailest thou
With white wings on the breeze?

Thou stately splendor, pressing on
From mystic East to radiant West,
On what proud errand art thou bent—
What high, mysterious quest?

The great sea bears thee up; the waves
With slow upheaval lift thy bow;
With long and steady sweep they glide
Under thy gleaming prow.

Thy slender masts, like spires of jet,
Are black against the reddening sky ;
Thy sails are full—yet idly droops
Yon pennant lifted high.

All silently thou speedest on ;
No sailor climbs thy shining spars ;
Thy carven saints alone keep ward
Beneath or sun or stars!

O Golden Galleon, well we know
Thou hast no freight of earthly mould ;
No Orient treasures dost thou bear,
No red gold lights thy hold!

Thou art but freighted with our dreams!
Sail on, O blessèd ship, sail on,
To some far land where dreams come true,
And all that's lost is won!

THE SECRET CHAMBER

INTO the secret chamber of my heart,
Wherein no mortal enters, Lord, come thou
And make thy dwelling-place ere day depart!

Even now the clouds are golden in the west;
The long, slant shadows creep across the way;
The glory fades on yonder mountain-crest.

It will be nightfall soon, for faint and far
The pallid moon, a silver crescent, hangs
Above the low reach of the horizon bar.

And night is lonely and beset with fears!
Come thou, O Lord, come in and dwell with me
Through the long darkness till the dawn appears!

O thou who didst create the human heart,
Didst thou not make one sure place for thyself?
It is high sanctuary where thou art!

Thou knowest, ah! thou knowest! Words are weak.
When the tongue falters and the lips are dumb,
Thou knowest all the yearning heart would speak!

The unuttered prayer thou hearest. Lo! the shrine
Waits for thy presence! Ere the day be done
Take thou possession, O thou Guest Divine!

“OUT OF THE SILENCE, SPEAK!”

OUT of the silence, speak!

Could you come through the waiting door,
With your eyes aglow and your heart on fire,

As in days that are no more ;

Could you enter the wide old hall,

And the chambers fresh and fair,

And wander from room to room

In the sweet, flower-scented air ;

Could you tread the garden paths

Where your own white lilies grow,

And the rose you planted blooms

As in Junes of long ago—

Would you be glad to come

Back to the world of men,

Back to your wonted place

In its busy ranks again?

Out of the shadows, speak!
O tender heart and true,
Could you return, return,
All would be changed for you!
For others sit at your board,
And others warm at your fire,
And over your walls strange shadows flit
As the flames leap high and higher.
The boys that you knew are bearded men,
And the bearded men are gray,
And the weight of years has touched them all—
You would know them not to-day!
There are children born of your line
To whom you are but a name—
A name, a dream, and a shadow,
A phantom they scarce can claim.

Out of the glory, speak!
From your bright heaven afar,
Where you need no light of sun,
Nor ray of moon or star,

Would you come to earth if you could
To face the changes here,
The sense of a strange new world
With its alien atmosphere?
For lo! as the Century dies
It spreadeth its mighty hands,
And a change comes over the deep,
And over the waiting lands,
As the youngest born of the nations
Lifts Destiny's proud gauge,
Accepting, for weal or woe,
Life's lofty heritage!

Out of the glory, speak!

*As your changeless years roll on,
Would ye return if ye could,
O ye who have lost and won?*

AFTER MANY DAYS

I sit beside my flying loom,
I toss the shuttle to and fro ;
The sunlight floods the quiet room,
Making the pattern gleam and glow.
Without, autumnal glories shine ;
Through warp and woof rich shadows play.
Would God it were more fair and fine,
This web that groweth day by day!

I weave and weave till day is done ;
But who will bleach the linen white,
By alchemy of rain and sun,
Hot summer noons, and dewy night?
And who its shining length will wear?
Under its folds what heart will hide
Its stress of passion or of prayer,
Of wordless bliss or love denied?

I plant a tree beside my gate ;
 Slowly it rises, fair and tall ;
With prophecy of royal state
 It towers above the old gray wall !
But who will see it in its prime ?
 What lovers seek its leafy ways ?
What bard unborn, with song and rhyme,
 Wed its green boughs to deathless lays ?

I build a mansion wide and fair ;
 I rear its towers of fretted stone ;
But who shall breathe its happy air ?
 Who call its sheltering roof his own ?
What guests shall throng its chambers fine ?
 What feet youth's joyous measures tread,
When I have drained life's last red wine,
 And grass grows green above my head ?

On the soft air I loose a song ;
 From pole to pole it drifteth far ;
It floateth fast, it floateth long,
 Inconsequent as breezes are !

But who will hear it as it flies
Through shadowy spaces, vast and dim,
And lure it from the lonely skies,
When I have done with song and hymn?

